



SB 414 – Climate Solutions Now Act – SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the EHEA Committee:

Blue Water Baltimore is the watershed-based nonprofit focused on improving water quality and community resilience within Baltimore City and Baltimore County, and home to the Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper. **We respectfully request your support of SB 414 – Climate Solutions Now.**

The Mid-Atlantic region is already experiencing the impacts of changing climate. In 2017, Blue Water Baltimore worked with researchers at the US Geological Survey and the Cary Institute of Ecosystems Studies to evaluate 20 years of data in the Gwynns Falls watershed in Baltimore County and City. This evaluation showed that rainfall has demonstrably increased and has impacted the health of this watershed.¹ The Baltimore region is increasingly experiencing “flashy” storm events that lead to local flooding, property damage, and in Baltimore City, the discharge of untreated sewage into homes and businesses due to old, leaky infrastructure.

Many communities in Baltimore are also subjected to increasing summer temperatures, called the “urban heat island” effect, because extensive pavement and few trees exacerbate heat. In fact, in 2018, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) measured summer temperatures across City neighborhoods at the same times in different locations and found that summer temperatures on a single day could be as much as 16° hotter in neighborhoods with fewer trees and more impervious cover². Many of these neighborhoods have higher populations of Black and Brown residents, higher rates of poverty, and higher incidences of poor health outcomes including respiratory ailments like asthma.

Senate Bill 414 would help reverse these disturbing trends by:

- 1) Committing the state to aggressive, but necessary, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that trap heat and pollutants in our cities and towns;
- 2) Mandating that a percentage of all future climate spending go to communities already overburdened by the impacts of climate change, like urban heat and flooding; and
- 3) Prioritizing climate mitigation efforts including the planting of some 5 million trees, with a minimum target for trees in our most impacted urban neighborhoods.

The time for action on climate is NOW; the costs of doing nothing are already too high for many communities to bear. As such, Blue Water Baltimore, on behalf of our thousands of members and supporters, respectfully urges a Favorable Report on SB 414. Thank you.

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¹ Factors affecting long-term trends in surface-water quality in the Gwynns Falls watershed, Baltimore City and County, Maryland, 1998–2016. <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/ofr20181038>

² <https://www.noaa.gov/news/hot-days-in-city-it-s-all-about-location>